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Health situation for athletes in the current coronavirus pandemic (SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19)

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Fact Sheet: Health Situation for Athletes in the Current Coronavirus Pandemic (SARS-CoV-2 / COVID-19)

Merkblatt: Gesundheitssituation für Sportler durch die aktuelle Coronavirus-Pandemie (SARS-CoV-2 / COVID-19)

The corona virus is present all over the world and the world is in a pandemic which forces athletes, trainers and sports organizations to take appropriate measures.

The New Global Health Situation

Tracing the course of the disease in Spain, the US, Iran and Italy, as well as the increase of infected persons in many other countries shows that, with rare exceptions, the virus named SARS-CoV-2 and the resultant disease COVID-19 cannot be successfully contained. The virus is apparently easily transmitted by infected persons with and without overt symptoms. **COVID-19 can also be spread by infected persons who appear to be healthy.**

The health authorities provide recommendations to prevent the spread of new infections. We strongly urge all sports organizations to inform their athletes about the dangers of infection with the SARS-CoV-2 and preventive possibilities. Such guidelines should comply with the recommendations issued by official health authorities, such as the WHO and local offices. As known for a common influenza infection, even simple measures can be effective in limiting the spread of the virus. The virus is a global pandemic and requires considerable efforts from everyone to bring it under control.

The Basic Rules for Staying Healthy

- **Wash your hands often and for at least 30 seconds with soap and hot water.**
- **Do not touch your face with your hands**
- **Stay at least 2 meters away from other people, wherever possible**
- **Avoid crowds**

Basic Rules for People who are Infected or who Feel Unwell

- **Typical symptoms are fever, dry cough, impaired sense of smell or taste, "bloodshot" eyes, mild diarrhea. But fatigue or shortness of breath may also be felt.**
- You should stay at home in self-quarantine and call your doctor
- Avoid group sports
- Don't get too close to your partner, family members or other persons and keep the minimum distance wherever possible
- Eat by yourself and use a separate toilet

- Wash your hands regularly with soap
- Contact your doctor and other people only by telephone
- Don't resume normal activities until your doctor has given the green light

Here Are Some General Recommendations

Prevention

- Everyone should take the same preventive measures used against a viral influenza, since COVID-19 is spread by droplets and the virus can survive on contaminated surfaces for up to a few days.
- Hands should be washed frequently with soap and water (30 seconds) and disinfected after drying with an alcoholic disinfectant.
- Meals should not be served as buffets.
- Rooms should be aired frequently.
- Some teams can still be in training camps, which is also a form of quarantine. In this case, daily cleaning of all facilities and maintenance of hygiene are obligatory. Surfaces, lavatories, toilets and door handles should be disinfected daily. Laundry service should be available.
- If travel is absolutely necessary, the risk of infection during travel in public transportation can be reduced by wearing face masks and goggles. Personal containers of alcoholic hand disinfectant should be taken along and used regularly.
- Varied, vitamin-rich food with sufficient vegetables and fruit helps to prevent infections or to alleviate the symptoms by improving immunity. Fruits containing Vitamin C, such as oranges or grapefruit, are particularly helpful. It is equally important to drink sufficient quantities to keep mucosae moist. The defense function of the mucosae is particularly impaired by cold, so it is important to keep the respiratory tract as warm as possible.

Use of Sport Facilities and Team Training in the Current Pandemic Situation

- Many training centers have already closed. The use of sports facilities, especially of changing rooms, showers and training equipment, should be strictly limited and controlled to the extent possible under official requirements.
- Single-athlete types of sports are generally possible, whereby attention must be paid to the distance from other athletes. Team, contact and combat sports are currently not possible. It is recommended that home cycles and strength trainers be

FACT SHEET

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used or that training be performed outdoors. If athletes are in a controlled self-quarantine situation (such as a training camp) or train in small groups (max. 5 persons) in rooms not accessible to the public, exceptions may be made, as long as they are compatible with official guidelines.

- A person is at lower risk of infection when training outdoors. The proximity of training partners may increase the risk.
- If possible, athletes should change clothes and shower at home and not in team changing rooms.

When Athletes Feel Sick

- In the event of typical symptoms, the athlete should take a training break, call the team doctor and follow instructions; this also applies to coaches. The training group or other contacts must be informed. For persons who test positive but who have no symptoms, we recommend not participating in activities with high physical intensity.
- Sick athletes and trainers should immediately be separated from the rest of a team, go into self-isolation and carefully disinfect their hands. They should wear a facemask if they have acute symptoms, taking care that the mask is used correctly.
- The isolation should continue two to three days longer than the actual signs of infection. Cancellation must be decided by the treating physician in accordance with official guidelines. It is important to have separate toilets for the sick people in order to prevent transmission of the virus via contaminated surfaces.

Does Vaccination Play a Role?

- There is currently no vaccination against the corona virus SARS-CoV-2.
- In general, yearly vaccination with tetravalent influenza vaccine is recommended for high-performance athletes and trainers. SARS-CoV-2 is not an influenza strain and cannot be prevented by this vaccine. The influenza vaccination is most effective in the northern hemisphere in November and in the southern hemisphere in June.

How can I Avoid Infection with the Corona Virus SARS-CoV-2?

- Fever is unusual in most colds and respiratory tract infections, but it is omnipresent in COVID-19.
- The likelihood of infection with the corona virus SARS-CoV-2 is very high in regions in which the infection is widespread (community infection, risk area). Caution in the current situation: travelers are potentially infectious, caution is generally required.
- The course of most infections with the corona virus is mild, but serious complications may occur, especially in the elderly and in persons with impaired immune systems.
- The doctor must consider infection with SARS-CoV-2 as a possible cause of infection in acute respiratory tract diseases.
- Athletes and those around them who are ill and have had contact with an infected person or with a person who has traveled in affected areas should be tested at a public health office capable of testing for SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 to obtain medical advice (in accordance with local health regulations). A 14-day quarantine may be necessary for such people. It is, however, important to comply with the recommendations of local health authorities or the WHO with respect to further tests and isolation. The transmission time appears to be from 1 to 14 days (median 2/7 days); during this time, an infected person can transmit the virus to other people, even if no clinical signs of infection are present (the virus may possibly

not be detectable during this asymptomatic phase).

- Testing may initially be negative. In the typical clinical course, the test should be repeated after 3-4 days before isolation is lifted in order to prevent contamination. ■

Recommendations of the Scientific Committee of the German Society of Sports Medicine and Prevention (DGSP e.V.).

Modified according to a recommendation from the Commission of Sports Medicine of the World Rowing Federation (FISA) dated 23.03.2020.

Where is Information Available?

On the following websites you will find the latest international information:



www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/novel-coronavirus-china



www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019



www.rki.de/DE/Content/InfAZ/N/Neuartiges_Coronavirus/nCoV_node.html



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